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ABSTRACT

This report evaluates a pilot program designed by a county school district and a local college to meet the needs of entry-year teachers in rural Clinton County, Ohio. The county consists of three local school districts serving approximately 4,800 students. The model used a full-time county mentor-teacher who was shared by local school districts, with on-site school support provided by 11 buddy teachers. The mentor and alternates participated in 50 hours of training at Wilmington College (Ohio), covering adult learning styles, developmental stages of beginning teachers, observation, supervision, feedback, and conferencing. The mentor teacher was then responsible for training the buddy teachers in the local districts. Additionally, monthly workshops were held for the buddy teachers and entry teachers on topics such as time management, parent conferencing, individualized instruction, planning, and use of electronic communication. College facilitators were available to the mentor or buddy teachers through a computer network. Survey results indicate that both the entry teachers and buddy teachers experienced increased confidence, a feeling of belonging, and a sense of professionalism. This program allowed small school districts that could not hire a full-time mentor to share the incurred expenses and instructional resources required for the program. In addition, it decreased isolation and gave rural first-year teachers the opportunity to form alliances. Appendices include sample surveys and results. (LP)

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Mentoring Entry Year Teachers in Rural Communities: A Model Program

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ABSTRACT

Problems and obstacles for Entry Year teachers are compounded in rural areas due to increased isolation and budget restraints. This paper outlines a pilot program in Clinton County, Ohio, which served as an efficient, cost-effective way to offer maximum support for Entry Year teachers through a collaborative venture.

The model used a full time County Mentor Teacher who was shared by local districts with on-site support provided by Buddy Teachers. Participants were prepared for the program by teacher educators at the local college. The two week summer session used the training of trainers model to give participants knowledge and experience with a variety of topics associated with mentoring.

This paper describes the procedures for selection, training, and implementation of the program. Details of support offered and the working structure of the program are delineated, and their effectiveness is assessed through program-participant feedback compiled from surveys. Qualitative data suggests that all participants benefitted from this type of program.

Mentoring Entry Year Teachers in Rural Communities: A Model Program

Background

Entry year teachers typically begin their teaching career with very little support. The principal or other administrators may offer an orientation program to introduce the new teacher to colleagues or they may provide information about rules, schedules, services and materials. Little else is available beyond the initial program, yet the Entry Year teacher is expected to assume full responsibility from the first day on the job.

Entry year teachers, especially in rural areas, are faced with what often appear to be insurmountable obstacles. They may be expected to teach the most difficult classes, to teach subjects in which they have an inadequate background, to take charge of extracurricular activities such as coaching, to work with insufficient and inadequate supplies and resources, and to work in isolated classrooms. The novice teacher is isolated from her colleagues in the school building because of the nature of teaching. In rural areas, she also may be isolated from other professionals in the community because of distances between residences and other professional settings. Young teachers who move from an urban setting to a rural setting may find the change particularly challenging. Teacher education programs, even those offered by universities located in rural areas, seldom prepare teachers for rural schools. Most programs train teachers for the urban or suburban setting (Gardener & Edington, 1982).

To address some problems that are faced by first year teachers, induction and mentoring programs began to appear in the 1980's. These programs were often in response to state mandates. An induction program

has been described as one that "has some degree of systematic and sustained assistance and not merely ...a series of orientation meetings..." (Huling-Austin, 1990, p. 536). Induction programs often address five goals that have been identified by Huling-Austin (1990). These goals include:

1. The improvement of teaching performance
2. Increased retention of promising beginning teachers during the induction years
3. Promoting the personal and professional well-being of beginning teachers by improving teachers' attitudes toward themselves and the profession
4. Satisfying mandated requirements related to induction and certification
5. The transmission of the culture of the system to beginning teachers

The emerging literature from the preliminary programs indicates that mentoring programs are beginning to meet these goals. This is particularly true of the retention of first year teachers. Teacher shortages are not likely to arise because too few teachers are trained, but because too few remain in the profession. About 15 percent of first year teachers leave the profession after their induction year (Schlechty & Vance, 1981). Studies of rural schools indicate that a major problem is the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers (Gardener & Edington, 1982; Swift, 1985). Those teachers who are involved in a mentoring program are more likely to stay. A four year retrospective study of teachers who were mentored during their first year indicated that only four percent of those teachers had left the profession each year (Odell and Ferraro, 1992). That figure is similar to the overall rate for teachers of 4.1% (Feistrizer, 1990).

Mentoring in Rural Schools

Much of the research involving mentoring has focused on programs in large school districts. These programs often include more than one hundred Entry Year teachers in a district. Such districts typically hire a number of mentor teachers who are released from teaching duties for the year to work with ten to fifteen Entry Year teachers each.

In rural and small school districts, there are far fewer Entry Year teachers. Many districts may hire only three or four new teachers each year and it would not be feasible to hire a full time mentor. Instead, smaller districts have either ignored the mandates for Entry Year programs or have provided an informal system in which an experienced teacher provides advice for the new teacher down the hall. The experienced teacher is not likely to receive remuneration or release time. When schedules are hectic and the new teacher is most in need of help, the volunteer mentor finds herself too busy to respond. As with many programs that depend on the altruism of the participants, the help is short-lived. Another problem with such programs is that there is unlikely to be a selection process. Anyone who is willing, can take part. On too many occasions it is the disgruntled, cynical teacher wishing to pass on her cynicism who becomes a mentor teacher rather than the experienced master teacher who wishes to pass on the best practices.

The Clinton County Program

A program designed to meet the needs of rural Entry Year teachers was begun in the Clinton county schools during the 1992-93 school year. Clinton county is a rural county in southwestern Ohio. Wilmington, a town of 11,000, is the largest city and the county seat. There are four school districts in the county, three locals and one city school district. Each local

district is autonomous with its own superintendent. A county superintendent and county school board provide administrative, curricular, and clerical services for each of the local districts. The three locals serve approximately 4800 pupils across an area of 318 square miles. There are 296 certified teachers in the school districts. Wilmington is also the site of Wilmington College, a small, career oriented, liberal arts college with a teacher education department.

In response to a request for proposals from the State Department of Education, the county superintendent and a member of the Education department at Wilmington College met to draw up a draft proposal for an Entry Year teacher program in November of 1991. Grants were to be awarded to programs that were both innovative and collaborative in nature. In response to the call for collaboration, the proposal was designed to include the three local school districts, the county office, and the education department at the College. The innovative nature of the program was addressed by the method in which the Entry Year teachers would be served by both a County Mentor teacher who would be hired to serve all three districts and by a Buddy teacher in the building. This would allow small districts that ordinarily would not be able to have a full time Mentor to share the incurred expense. A second innovative feature was the use of electronic communication to connect all the parties involved.

When the first draft was completed, a planning committee was convened. The committee consisted of the superintendents, an administrator, and two teachers from each district. Two of the teachers were active members of the local association. The composition of the committee assured that all constituents would be represented and would have a stake in the successful outcome of the project.

In January, 1992, the committee was notified by the State Department that the proposal had been accepted and that the program would be funded for $70,000 to provide for an Entry Year teacher program. The county office served as the fiscal agent.

Selection of the Mentor and Buddies

Nomination forms and applications were developed by the planning committee and included the following selection criteria for the County Mentor Teacher: a willingness to participate, demonstrated exemplary teaching practices, evidence of professional growth, involvement in leadership positions, effective communication skills, accessibility to colleagues and a solid knowledge of available community resources. Teachers could nominate themselves or be nominated by an administrator or another teacher. The candidates for the mentor teacher were interviewed by the planning committee who selected the Mentor and two alternates. The same method was used to select the eleven Buddy teachers. The two Mentor alternates participated in the mentor training and became Buddy teachers during the school year.

Training

Since none of the school districts had had a formal mentoring program, the training was an important component. One unique aspect of the model that made it workable for rural school districts was the notion of teachers serving as trainers for other teachers. The mentor teacher had to be trained not only to serve as a mentor but also to serve as a trainer for the Buddy teachers in the local districts. The mentors and alternates participated in 50 hours of training provided at Wilmington College before the school year began. The trainers were members of the Education department faculty at Wilmington College and at The Ohio State University.

All had experience in staff development and in the supervision of pre-service teachers. The topics for the training sessions included: the role of the mentor teacher, adult learning styles, developmental stages of beginning teachers, effective teaching, clinical supervision, observation, goal setting, feedback, peer coaching, conferencing, reflective teaching, team building, problem solving, traditional and alternative methods of classroom management, and individualizing instruction.

After learning and practicing the observation, supervision, feedback, and conferencing skills, the mentors and alternates taught the skills to the Buddy teachers. The mentors began their training sessions on Monday and had two and one-half days of intensive training. On Wednesday afternoon, the Buddy teachers began their training sessions. The initial teaching of the buddies took place under the supervision of the facilitators from the College. While the Buddy teachers were receiving training in supervisory skills, the mentor teacher was practicing training techniques. The training continued with the mentor teachers having sessions in the morning, then providing training to the Buddies in the afternoon. The mentor teachers participated in fifty hours of training sessions in a ten day period and the Buddy teachers participated in fifteen hours of training sessions in a six day period.

On Going Support

The project called for continued support and activities provided for the Buddy teachers by the County Mentor Teacher. Monthly workshops were planned for the Buddy teachers alone, the entry teachers alone, and for the Buddy and Entry Year teachers together with topics determined according to the needs of the Entry Year or Buddy teachers. The first workshop included both the Buddy and Entry Year teachers discussing classroom

management. Subsequent workshops focused on time management, parent conferencing, individualized instruction, planning, and use of electronic communication.

While it was expected that the Buddy teachers would provide support for the Entry Year teachers on a day to day basis, the support of the mentor teacher was available for both the Entry Year and Buddy teachers. College facilitators were available to the mentor or Buddy teachers through a computer network connecting each of the school buildings with each other and with the Education department at the College.

The County Mentor teacher also served as a resource person for the Buddy teachers and Entry Year teachers. While many resources are too costly for each individual district, sharing across three districts makes them more affordable. A newsletter and a list of available resources were sent to the Buddy and Entry Year teachers each month and more frequent announcements were posted on the computer network.

As anticipated, some Entry Year teachers were having more difficulty than others in a number of different areas. While one mentor who has sole responsibility for eight to ten teachers may not have the time for the intense development needed, the Buddy teacher who was available each day, along with the mentor teacher could provide that kind of service. Typical problems of the first year teachers have reflected those that are found in the literature. Difficulty in dealing with discipline and classroom management were common concerns. A few teachers were having trouble planning lessons, and some had concerns about locating resources. Problems tended to be expressed first to the Buddy teacher, then to the Mentor if they could not be solved within the building.

Survey Data

An initial survey was sent to the Entry Year teachers in mid November, to the Buddy teachers in early January, and to the Principals in early January. Nine of twelve Entry year surveys were returned, twelve of thirteen Buddy teacher surveys were returned (two Buddy teachers shared one Entry Year teacher) and eight of eleven principal surveys were returned (See Appendices for survey samples and data).

The results of the Entry Year survey indicated that the nine teachers had been observed a total of 40 times by the Buddy and Mentor teachers and had participated in more than 73 conferences before the end of the first semester. All but one reported that they had received ideas for instruction from either the Buddy or Mentor teacher. All had received ideas about discipline, time management, and planning. All of the Entry Year teachers perceived the program to be at least as helpful as they expected it to be.

Comments made by the Entry Year teachers indicated the aspect of the program that was most helpful was the ideas they received from the workshops and from the Buddy and Mentor teachers. Most of the problems they encountered seemed to center on management issues such as student conduct in the classroom and time management.

The goals set by the Entry Year teachers focused on how they could deliver instruction in a more efficient, organized manner. None of the teachers mentioned student learning, and only one mentioned the students at all (have students enjoy themselves). Most of the teachers indicated they had enough interaction with the Buddy and Mentor teacher, but several wanted more contact with teachers in the same teaching area.

While there were a number of similarities between the Buddy teachers and the Entry Year teachers in the way they perceived the program, there

were also a number of differences. Most of the Buddy teachers stated they had provided suggestions in at least three of four different areas (instruction, discipline, time management, and planning). Nine of the twelve reported observed changes in the teaching of the Entry Year teacher based on the suggestions. Buddy teachers reported more observations and conferences with the Entry Year teachers, however this was probably a function of receiving surveys at a later time. As with the Entry Year teachers, all the Buddy teachers perceived the program to be at least as helpful as they expected it to be.

The Buddy teachers were asked to rank the criteria that should be considered when matching Buddy teachers with Entry Year teacher. All believed the most important was for both teachers to be in the same building. A second criterion deemed important was that the two teachers teach the same subject or same grade level. The two criteria judged as unimportant were matching the two by age and gender.

When the Buddy teachers were asked to comment on the most helpful aspects of the program their comments reflected benefits to both the Entry and the Buddy teacher. Most saw the benefit to the Entry Year teacher as having a support person to talk with and to ask questions. They saw the benefit to themselves as improving their teaching techniques.

Many of the problem areas centered on the aspect of time. Some found it difficult to attend after school workshops, others reported not having enough time to meet with the Entry Year teachers, and a few simply stated the program took too much time. Other problems encountered with the program included three Buddy teachers who felt their Entry Year teachers were not benefitting from the program. Indeed, one of the Entry Year teachers elected to withdraw from the program at the end of the semester

and was planning to resign at the end of the year. Another problem that surfaced in several surveys was the inability to help teachers in an area or grade level different from the Buddy teacher.

All the Buddy teachers reported that the Mentor teacher had provided support, ideas, and specific advice whenever problems arose. While the original intent of the program was for the Mentor teacher to work primarily with the Buddy teachers, it was apparent from the comments made by both Buddy and Mentor teachers that a great deal of her time was spent in direct contact with the Entry Year teachers.

The most striking difference between the two sets of data focused on how the Entry Year teacher had been helped by the program. The Entry Year teachers felt that receiving ideas for instruction, for discipline, and for planning were the most beneficial aspects of the program. The Buddy teachers all mentioned that the improvement in confidence of the Entry Year teachers was the most beneficial. None of the Entry year teachers mentioned increased confidence as a goal and in a preliminary needs assessment, most seemed to indicate a high level of confidence. It is possible that improved instruction and management made the teachers appear more confident when they were observed by the Buddy teachers.

Eight of the ten principals who had an Entry Year teacher in their building completed a survey. These surveys indicated that all the teachers had been assigned a Buddy teacher and all but one principal had done a formal evaluation of the Entry Year teacher. The number of Entry year teachers hired during the years of tenure of each principal ranged from one to twenty-six and most of the teachers had returned for a second year. The principals all felt they had received sufficient and helpful information about the program from several different sources. Three of the principals were on

the planning committee that prepared the proposal. The others reported receiving information either from the Mentor teacher or from the County office. While none of the principals reported that the program had influenced their hiring decisions, all reported benefits to the Entry Year teacher. These benefits included increased confidence, a feeling of belonging, and professionalism. Several also cited the collaboration as a benefit. When asked what drawbacks there were for the parties involved, there were few noted.

The principals pointed out several differences between the Entry Year teachers in the program and other first year teachers they had worked with. The teachers in the program seemed more relaxed with the evaluation process, they fit in quicker, they were better informed, and took less of the principals' time. The principals all reported working in some way with the Mentor teacher. Though the program was designed to provide non-evaluative observations by peers, several principals reported discussing observations with the Mentor. The observations discussed, however, were those done by the principal rather than by the Mentor.

Discussion

All the parties involved had a positive perception of the program. They each listed a number of benefits to both the Entry teachers and the Buddy teachers. The Entry Year teachers believed they were improving their instructional and management techniques and the principals and Buddy teachers believed the first year teachers were more confident as a result of the program. The Buddy teachers also experienced a renewed confidence and a sense of professionalism due to the program.

Other than a lack of time, there were few drawbacks noted. The issue of time was a result of the decision to provide a stipend rather than release

time for the Buddy and Entry teachers. This can be remedied in future programs by insuring common planning times and having Buddy and Entry Year teachers in the same building.

Benefits of the Model for a Rural District

The County Mentor model offers several advantages for rural school districts. Few individual rural districts are able to provide a mentor teacher who would be available to observe, supervise, provide feedback, and offer training and coaching to the Entry Year teachers on an on-going basis. If a district hires four Entry Year teachers in four buildings across the district, a mentor would need to be released from all teaching duties to serve the four teachers. With the county mentor model, Buddy teachers can work with one Entry Year teacher in his or her building. Compensation can be in the form of release from other duties, release from one class for a secondary teacher, or a small stipend. The cost of the full time mentor teacher can be shared by several districts in a county.

A second advantage is the use of shared resources. Training, books, journals, videotapes and other costly items can be shared by more than one district. Districts with few Entry Year teachers would be unlikely to need materials for long periods of time. The training of trainers model is one that can be used not only in an Entry Year program, but in other staff development programs as well. It was particularly useful to have the Mentors training the Buddy teachers while they were still in the process of their own training. The trainer was available to help shape the Buddy teacher training, but began to spend less time in direct contact during each session. This also occurred with the Buddy training of the Entry Year teachers. While the Mentor began the year spending a great deal of time with the Entry Year teachers, as the year progressed, she spent more time

with the Buddy teachers and less time with each of the Entry Year teachers. The model provides a cost effective method of providing training and follow-up to many teachers across several school districts.

Perhaps the most important advantage of the model for rural teachers is the opportunity afforded Entry Year teachers to form alliances and friendships with other first year teachers. The preliminary research on Entry Year programs indicates that one reason mentoring has been successful is because of the opportunity it provides first year teachers to meet with other first year teachers. It is in the rural schools that the isolation of first year teachers is likely to be most glaring. There is often only one first year teacher in a school building. That teacher may be new to the community as well as new to teaching. A mentor can provide not only training, feedback, teaching strategies, and management strategies, but friendship and companionship as well. Monthly workshops provide the chance for Entry Year teachers to meet each other and the computer network and county directory give them the opportunity to make contact with each other. Perhaps the best indication of how the program served the Entry Year teachers can be summed up by the statement on one survey. "If I had not been involved in this program, I would not have had anyone to talk to. This program has saved my sanity. Please continue to offer this service to first-year teachers."

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APPENDIX A
ENTRY YEAR TEACHER SURVEY

ENTRY YEAR TEACHER SURVEY

NAME_____
SCHOOL_____
NAME OF BUDDY TEACHER_____

1. Are you still working with the original buddy teacher who was assigned to you?

yes	no
7	2

2. Did you meet with your buddy teacher prior to the beginning of the school year?

yes	no
7	2

3. Did your buddy teacher provide information about the school policies, paperwork, and routines prior to or during the first week of school?

yes	no
8	1

4. How many times have you been observed by your buddy teacher?
0___ 1_2__ 2__5_ 3__1_ 4__1__ 5____ 6___ more than 6____

5. How many times have you been observed by the County Mentor Teacher?
0___ 1___ 2_5__ 3_3__ 4__1__ 5____ 6___ more than 6____

6. How many conferences have you had with your Buddy teacher?
0___ 1___ 2___ 3___ 4__4__ 5____ 6_1__ more than 6__4_ _

7. How many conferences have you had with the County Mentor teacher?
0___ 1___ 2_1__ 3_2__ 4__3__ 5__1__ 6___ more than 6__2_ _

8. Has your Buddy teacher provided ideas in the following areas that you have implemented in your classroom?

a. instruction	yes	8	no	1
b. discipline	yes	8	no	1
c. time management	yes	7	no	2
d. planning	yes	7	no	2

9. Has the County Mentor teacher provided ideas in the following areas that you have implemented in your classroom?

a. instruction	yes	8	no	1
b. discipline	yes	9	no	0
c. time management	yes	9	no	0
d. planning	yes	9	no	0

10. Please check which of the following statements most closely matches how you perceive the program to this point

a. The program is more helpful than I expected it to be	3
b. The program is as helpful as I expected it to be	6
c. The program is not as helpful as I expected it to be	0
d. The program is not at all helpful	0

11. Have you observed any other teachers in their classroom since the beginning of school?

yes	no
4	5

The following questions require a written response. Please answer in the space provided.

1. What has been most helpful about the program?

meeting other first year teachers
emotional support
workshops have been quite helpful
Ideas gained from the workshops
Help with frustrating problems
Specific ideas from mentor for instruction and planning
Someone to talk to. My Buddy teacher has been a tremendous help
Handouts with teaching hints and monthly meetings
Having the extra resources

2. What problems have you encountered thus far that you have needed help with?

Behavior during transition
"unwritten" rules and discipline problems
classroom management
I've needed ideas to help me teach creatively
I was spending 9 hrs a week writing plans
Discipline problems, time management skills
Discipline and time management
Discipline in the classroom and study hall

3. What help has been provided by your buddy and by the County Mentor Teacher with those problems?

Different ideas and I've tried the ones that "fit" me
They have given me support and ideas. The ideas have made a big difference
Ideas about writing. Ideas through E-mail allow me to receive ideas while still relevant to teaching
She went over my plans and pointed out areas where I could "cut back"
Both have made suggestions and comments to solve problems and weak areas
Techniques for a particular child in my class who misbehaves
Suggestions, support and encouraging ideas for discipline procedures
Information about things going on in school

4. What goals have you set since the beginning of school? Were these the result of conferences with your Buddy teacher or with the County Mentor Teacher? What progress has been made toward meeting the goals?

Become more organized in planning
Manage time at school
Do the best job that I possibly can
Incorporate more writing into teaching literature
More creative ways to teach
Get settled in and organized
Manage my time and save time for myself
Be organized, enthusiastic, effective teacher

5. Do you have enough interaction with your buddy, the mentor teacher, other first year teachers, and other teachers in your grade level/subject area? If not, do you have suggestions for increasing contacts?

I do not have enough interaction with teachers in my field
I have enough contact
Yes, I feel I have enough interaction
Contact with mentor and buddy are fine, contact with teachers in my area are minimal
I believe I do
Yes, I think we do
I think we have good interaction all around

6. Other suggestions for the program or additional comments?

Continue the program; it saved my sanity; its a nice support system; all seems to be going well; the program has been a big help to me; conferences are more helpful than observations

APPENDIX B
BUDDY TEACHER SURVEY

BUDDY TEACHER SURVEY

NAME_____
SCHOOL_____
NAME OF ENTRY YEAR TEACHER_____

1. Are you still working with the original entry year teacher who was assigned to you?
yes 1 1 no 1

2. Did you meet with your entry year teacher prior to the beginning of the school year?
yes 8 no 4

3. How many times have you observed your entry year teacher?
0___ 1_3 __ 2_2__ 3_3 __ 4__2__ 5_1__ 6___ more than 6__1__

4. How many conferences have you had with your entry year teacher?
0___ 1___ 2_2__ 3_1__ 4__1__ 5_1___ 6___ more than 6__7 __

5. How many times have you contacted the county mentor teacher regarding your entry year teacher?
0 _2_ 1_2___ 2__1___ 3__2 __ 4__3 _ 5__1 __ 6_____ more than 6__1___

6. Have you provided suggestions or ideas in the following areas to your entry year teachers?

a. instruction	yes	1 1	no	1
b. discipline	yes	1 1	no	1
c. time management	yes	1 1	no	1
d. planning	yes	9	no	3

7. Have you observed changes in the teaching of the entry year teacher based on your observations, conferences, and suggestions?
yes 9 no 3

8. Please check which of the following statements most closely matches how you perceive the program to this point

a. The program is more helpful than I expected it to be	3
b. The program is as helpful as I expected it to be	9
c. The program is not as helpful as I expected it to be	0
d. The program is not at all helpful	0

9. Have you been observed by your entry year teacher since the beginning of school?

yes	no
5	7

10. Which of the following do you think should be considered when selecting buddy teachers (please rank 1-5 with 1 most important, 5 least important) μ

buddy teacher should be in the same building_____	1.1
buddy teacher should teach the same subject(sec.) or grade level(elem)_____	2.3
age difference should be no more than 5 years_____	4.0
buddy teacher and entry year teacher should be the same sex_____	3.1

11. Have you sent or received a message through the EMail system?
yes___ 6 _____ no____6 _____

The following questions require a written response. Please answer in the space provided.

1. What has been most helpful about the program?

Provides a support person for questions, ideas and problems
Requires us to evaluate our own methods and focus on the positive
More confidence in myself because I've helped someone else
Helped me evaluate my teaching style and be a constructive critic
Mentor has been helpful (3 responses)
Chance to curb trouble early
Atmosphere of trust which allows for candid, confidential discussions
Buddy teacher must recall techniques that have been forgotten
I have enjoyed the close contact with my entry teacher
Entry teacher has someone to go to and ask questions

2. What problems have you encountered with the program?

Not enough time (2 responses)
Evening meetings are exhausting
Meeting times (3 responses)
My partner does not see the program as important
Different grade levels
Time to meet with entry teacher during school time
Different building
Sometimes feel I'm intimidating my entry year teacher
Teaching area of entry teacher is out of my area of expertise
Difficult to give advice that may not be wanted

3. What help has been provided by the County Mentor Teacher with those problems?

Support for release time
Provides solid advice to make all feel at ease
Has spent time with entry year teacher
Provided resources and made herself available
Supportive and communicative
I'm not penalized when I get too busy
Advice on specific role
Tried to encourage us and stayed in contact
An encouragement at all times

4. In what ways has the teaching of the entry year teacher improved as a result of the program?

More confident and positive
Someone to confide in about problems
Organization
More relaxed with principal observations
Has recognized her weakness
Has confidence
More confidence
I have not seen improvement
Discipline situations
More confident
She has a great deal of confidence
Lesson plans, discipline, and control of class

5. What changes could be made to enable you to offer more help to the entry year teacher?

observe effective teachers together
Make observations mandatory
A larger role of county officials to reinforce its importance
Schedule meetings at different times
More flexibility in my schedule
Encourage entry teachers to ask for help
More contact with other entry teachers

6. Other suggestions for the program or additional comments?

many questions are handled in the lounge, the hallway, or bus duty. Don't know how it would work if she were in a different building
I hope we can continue (3 responses)
Split workshop sessions so buddies and entry teachers can meet together
Value of the program is self-evident
I wish I had been in such a program when I started teaching. It can't help but improve the profession

APPENDIX C
ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY

ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY

Name_____

School_____

1. How many entry year teachers are in your building? _____
   1 (4 buildings) **2** (3 buildings) **3** (1 building)

2. Has each entry year teacher been assigned a buddy teacher as part of the entry-year teacher program?
   Yes **8** No **0**

3. Have you done a formal evaluation of the entry year teacher (s) in your building?
   Yes **7** No **1**

4. How many entry year teachers have been hired in your building during your tenure as principal?
   Number of years as principal **M=6.8**
   Number of entry year teachers **M=7.6**

5. How many of those entry year teachers returned for a second year? **6.6**

6. Were other teachers hired in your building this year who were not first year teachers? Y **3** N **5** If yes, how many? **1,2,2**

7. What information did you receive about the entry year teacher program before the beginning of the school year? What other information would have been useful?

Well prepared
Information from County Office
Met with mentor
Newsletters, workshop information, meeting with mentor and buddy
Participated in writing proposal (2 responses)
Entry-year packet information
A staff member was involved with planning and development
County office provided good overview of program

8. Did the program influence your hiring decisions? If so, how?

No (4 responses)
No-but it may in the future
No, but it provided an additional support system
Not really except I had more confidence they would get good help
Somewhat. Knowing county would help made the decision easier

9. What benefits has the program had for the entry year teachers, buddy teachers, and other teachers in the building?

Made beginning of the year easier
Confidence, cooperation, good direction
Support network, encouragement
Saves principal's time
Feeling of belonging from the beginning
Give new teacher more confidence
Exposure to new techniques
Made entry year teacher more comfortable
Renewed confidence for buddy teacher
Collaborative effort in the county sends a positive message

10. What drawbacks have there been for each of the above groups?

Observation of teachers in surrounding schools was difficult
Maybe too much observation?
Availability of time for buddy teacher and entry year teacher to meet
Union difficulties
None (4 responses)

11. Are there differences between the first year teachers who are part of the program and first year teachers you have evaluated in the past? If so, please comment.

Yes, the teachers seem more relaxed with the evaluation process
They seem to fit in quicker and need less attention
Yes, better informed
More attention, training and resources provided
Having a mentor system requires less of my time to check on new teachers
New teachers are better prepared now than they were a few years ago

12. In what ways have you worked with the county mentor teacher and the buddy teachers to provide feedback to the first year teacher(s)?

Sharing of information and observation
Frequent contact early, less as year progressed
Not much other than informal discussions
Several conference meetings
Through conferencing or conversations, discuss strengths and weaknesses of first year teachers
Verifies my observations

13. Would you be interested in attending an in-service program designed for administrators to explain the program and the observation systems used to provide feedback to the teachers?

Yes 5 No 3

14. Would you be interested in an in-service program for non-participating teachers to familiarize them with the program?

Yes 5 No 3